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For Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Inspection.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING ADMINISTRATION



U.S. SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF DAMAGED
OR REPAIRED PACKAGES OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Effective April 20, 1942

INTRODUCTION

Finding a uniform and equitable method of handling claims for produce containers that are delivered in a broken, damaged, or repaired condition is a problem that has received much attention from both the transportation agencies and the produce trade for years. The United States Department of Agriculture has been requested by representatives of both the carriers and the produce trade to establish Federal standards for such packages that can be used throughout the country in determining whether or not such packages are damaged, and if so, whether the damage is of a character and degree that the consignee is entitled to claim damages.

It is impossible to specify in detail every condition that may be encountered in applying the standards. Inspectors in classifying packages showing the types of damage not specifically covered by these definitions will be guided, of course, in these instances by the illustrations given herein.

Classifications will be made only of packages that have been segregated and are agreed upon by representatives of both parties as being in dispute. It is further understood that when there are no undamaged containers available for comparison, the inspector shall use his best judgment and general knowledge of similar cases in making the classification. Requests for this service may be filed either by representatives of the carrier or the receiver.

CLASSIFICATION OF PACKAGES

A package containing fresh fruits or vegetables shall be classified as GOOD ORDER if it complies with the description of GOOD ORDER for both CONTAINERS and CONTENTS as stated below.

A package containing fresh fruits or vegetables shall be classified as BAD ORDER if it fails to comply with the description of GOOD ORDER for either CONTAINERS or CONTENTS as stated below.

When it is agreed that the dispute involves only one point which can be determined by external examination of the packages such as the removal of branded slats, it will not be necessary to examine the contents for other types of damage.

GOOD ORDER CONTAINERS

GOOD ORDER containers shall have the same general appearance as original containers that have not been racked, broken, or otherwise damaged to an extent that would affect their general appearance. The containers shall have approximately the same strength and rigidity as undamaged containers.

The following points shall NOT be considered sufficient to justify lowering containers to BAD ORDER.

1. Broken or unrepaired packages when their contents are worthless due to natural deterioration unless such deterioration is associated with the breakage of container.
2. Torn paper liners or pads.
3. Damage to containers which can definitely be attributed to flagrantly defective or unsuitable material, design, or assembly for the purpose for which used.
4. Disintegration or bursting of sacks associated with or caused by deterioration or nature of the contents.
5. Disintegration or bursting of paper or paper-net sacks associated with or caused by moisture of condensation or body ice.
6. Disintegration or chafing of containers such as sacks when proper protective materials are used in the car except when associated with a shift of the load.
7. Packages showing evidence of intentional damage such as ax marks, heel prints, etc.

BAD ORDER CONTAINERS

Bad order shall include all containers which have a missing part or parts, or which are broken or otherwise damaged or racked to an extent that the general appearance is affected or structure materially weakened, except those described under GOOD ORDER CONTAINERS.

The following are the more common causes for lowering containers to BAD ORDER classifications:

1. Broken condition or missing or loosened part or parts.
2. Part or parts poorly or insecurely replaced.
3. "Essential features of identify have been lost by replacement of original branded part or parts with plain or branded part or parts."
4. Replaced part or parts materially different in size, appearance and flexibility.
5. Part or parts designating size, grade, grower numbers, and variety replaced with plain part or parts. If the plain part or parts are marked, marks must be neat and of the same general type and appearance as the original marking.

6. Both cover cleats on crates so battered, split, or heavily renailed that they cannot be opened for display.
7. Split solid end if not of practically original strength and rigidity.
8. Label missing or materially disfigured account breakage.
9. Materially stained account water from bunker ice, leaking roof or from being repaired on dirty or wet floor of pier or delivery platform.
10. Dry parts on wet containers when materially affecting appearance.
11. Weak or rickety containers.
12. Racking exceeding one inch in small sized containers such as apple boxes, asparagus or melon crates, half size vegetable crates, or exceeding two inches in large sized crates such as Los Angeles crates or cabbage crates.
13. Cinder dust or other similar material which appreciably mars the appearance.
14. Sacks that have been sewed at torn places or at mouth in reconditioning at destination when the appearance is materially affected.
15. Sacks that have been cut or have holes torn by rough floor racks, rails, or other protuberances in walls or on floors of car.

GOOD ORDER CONTENTS

Contents of GOOD ORDER containers shall have the same general appearance as the contents of original containers that have not been racked, broken, or otherwise damaged. The pack shall be intact and the arrangement shall be the same as in undamaged containers.

If the containers merit good order classification the following kinds of damage to their contents will not be sufficient to lower packages to bad order class:

1. Natural deterioration such as decay, mold, overmaturity, freezing, disease, or insect damage.
2. Bruising, cuts, and chafing caused by an excessive amount of the product or pack ice which is responsible for an abnormal bulge of top or sides of containers such as:

- (a) Overpacking of bunched asparagus or celery which causes excessive side bulge of container.
 - (b) Beets, lettuce, pears, peaches, etc., packed with an excessive amount of product which causes bruising in lidding containers.
 - (c) Cuts, and bruises caused by pack ice on such products as lettuce, spinach.
3. Damage to protruding or exposed contents in packages that are packed with a part of their contents protruding or exposed, such as:
- (a) Cabbage, romaine, escarole in hampers.
 - (b) Dill, dandelion, root parsley, bunched beets, in crates.
 - (c) Spinach, kale in baskets.
4. Bruising or crushing, caused by product being too tightly packed or due to the use of oversize or irregularly sized contents, such as:
- (a) Melons in crates.
 - (b) Bruising of lettuce in layers in crates.
5. Bruising, chafing or breakage of contents, caused by lack of proper protective materials, such as:
- (a) Liners for Northwestern pear boxes.
 - (b) Cover pads for peaches, plums, etc.
 - (c) Liners for lettuce in crates.
6. Bruising, chafing, cuts, etc., due to the immaturity or over-maturity of the product, such as:
- (a) Immature Bermuda or Northern grown onions.
 - (b) Ripe peaches in baskets.
 - (c) Immature potatoes that may turn brown or under pressure may become flattened or bruised.
7. Damage that can definitely be attributed to improper original loading of cars, such as:
- (a) Bruising and chafing of contents caused by movement of sacks in loosely loaded loads or in loads in which contents become damaged by being in contact with walls of car.

8. Slackness or disarrangement of contents due to -

(a) natural shrinkage, decay or other deterioration, such as decay of peaches, grapes, tomatoes, etc.

(b) use of insufficient quantities or incorrect sizes of original contents, such as:

(1) Bruising, cuts, chafing, etc., caused by movement of contents in slack packs.

(2) Using 125 size apples in 100 size pack.

(3) Using 7x7 size tomatoes in 6x6 pack.

9. Damage to contents caused by packing products in containers that are not suited for the purpose for which they are used, such as:

(a) Topped carrots in papernet sacks when top ice is used.

10. Loss of specimens between unbroken original parts of containers.

BAD ORDER CONTENTS

Contents of BAD ORDER containers shall include the contents of packages that have not been restored to the same general condition and appearance as the product in original containers which have not been broken, racked, or otherwise damaged, except those described under GOOD ORDER CONTENTS.

The following are the more common causes for lowering contents to BAD ORDER classification:

1. Loss of pack ice by careless or improper handling by carrier representatives in unloading or recooling.
2. Damage to properly packed protruding or exposed contents, which are ordinarily packed with part of contents protruding or exposed, by improper or careless handling by carrier representatives in unloading or recooling.
3. Contents, wraps, or packing material wet or materially stained from bunker ice or leaking roof or on account of being placed on dirty or wet floor of pier or delivery platform.
4. Bruised, cut, crushed, chafed, or shattered when in excess of that found in the GOOD ORDER containers in the load or lot.
5. Punctures by nails or other foreign objects resulting from breakage or recooling.

6. Packs disarranged account breakage or poorly replaced in re Coopering.
7. One or more specimens short account breakage or re Coopering.
8. Repacked with specimens of different size, variety or grade than remainder of contents.
9. Repacked with more or fewer specimens than size marked.
10. Badly disarranged or torn wrappers in repacked wrapped products.
11. Slack pack account repacking.
12. Cinder dust or other similar material which appreciably mars the appearance.
13. Dirty specimens or foreign material included with repacked contents.

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